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c. 1965/02/11

20

10 FEBRUARY 1965

6:20 p.m.

JCS 102212Z to CINCPAC directed coordinated attacks by United States and VNAF against North Viet Nam target as reprisal for VC attack against U.S. personnel at Qui Nhon.

Targets assigned are:

For U.S. Forces - Primary Target 24, Chanh Hoa
(2d Air Division) Barracks.

Alternate Target 33, Dong Hoi
Barracks.

For VNAF - Primary Target 32, Vu Con Barracks.

Alternate Target 39, Chap Le Barracks.

From COMUSMACV 101725Z strike forces will probably be:

VNAF - 24 strike A-1H aircraft.
8 flak suppression F-100 aircraft.

(U.S. 2d Division aircraft will provide CAP).

U.S. - 28 strike F-105 aircraft.
12 MIG CAP F-100 aircraft.
12 flak suppression F-100 aircraft.

(7th Fleet aircraft may provide decoy plus destruction
Vinh Son radar.)

6:30 p.m.

Bromley Smith advised earlier that Press release will be coordinated for release initially by SAIGON after attack has been completed, to be followed by Press announcement about one-hour later from the White House.

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6:45 p.m.

CTG 77.7 102238Z to CINCPAC set forth strike plan against Target 24, Chanh Hoi Barracks. Aircraft employed will be from USS HANCOCK, (CVA -19) and will consist of:

Strike Aircraft - 8, A4C.

4, A4E.

Flak Suppression Aircraft - 4, A4E

4, F8E

RESCAP Aircraft - 4, AlH

Photo Reece Aircraft - 2, RF8A

Photo Recce Escort - 4, F8C

Alternate specified was Target 53 -- believe this to be error as Target 33 had been directed by JCS as alternate.

Total time en route will be 2 hours for prop aircraft and 1 hour for jets.

If the above is correct, 2d Air Division aircraft will not be used for strike.

7:25 p.m.

CINCPAC 102323Z to CINCPACFLT, CINCPACAF and COMUSMACV assigned Target 24, primary, and Target 33, alternate, to CINCPACFLT and for COMUSMACV to assign Target 32, primary, and Target 39, alternate, to VNAF.

CINCPACAF to provide flak suppression and CAP to VNAF. Strikes to be simultaneous, if possible, but not if undue delay experienced.

CINCPACAF to be strike coordinator.

Estimated and actual TOT's required.

8:02 p.m.

MACV EAP 110015Z gave latest Qui Nhon military casualties as 1 KIA, 17 WIA, and 24 missing. In addition, 4 civilians who were in hotel at time of explosion were killed; 2 women, and 2 children.

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10 FEBRUARY 1965 (Continued)

9:40 p.m. Received information from WHCA Duty Officer that London was activating PICKWICK (London) line for a call from Prime Minister Wilson to President Johnson. It was estimated that circuit would not be ready for about 30 minutes.
Bromley Smith advised McGeorge Bundy who was with the President.

10:10 p.m. CTG 77.7 110028Z specified coordination instructions. Indicated strike aircraft would come from USS RANGER and USS CORAL SEA, in addition to USS HANCOCK aircraft specified earlier by CTG 77.7 102238Z.

10:25 p.m. PICKWICK circuit operational; however, Mr. Bundy already has London call in progress on a clear line.

10:28 p.m. CTG 77.7 1102111Z corrected his 102238Z. Alternate target now "33" vice "53."

10:30 p.m. MACV EAC 110147Z stated dependent withdrawal will be completed February 18th.

11:06 p. m. NMCC advised by phone conversation that strikes on Target 24, Chanh Hoa Barracks, would commence at 110600Z (0100 Washington Time) by aircraft from the USS HANCOCK and USS RANGER. Aircraft from USS CORAL SEA will strike same target 15 minutes later. Strike on Target 32, Vu Con Barracks, is scheduled for 110800Z (0300 Washington Time). This information had been received by telephone call at NMCC. Follow-on messages were expected.

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11:27 p.m.

Mr. Bundy advised that the President did not desire to be called during the night for routine reports -- only in the event of extremely unusual or spectacular happenings.

The President would call if he desired information. Bromley Smith relayed this to General Cox, Duty General in the NMCC, as guidance for those in DOD. If the necessity arises to pass information to the President, clear first with Bromely Smith. Also, Mr. Smith would like to know if any unusual happenings -- specifically, if MIG opposition is encountered.

11:47 p. m.

Mr. Reedy is to be called an hour before SAIGON expects to make its Press announcement following the strikes. SAIGON is to inform us of their expected release time. Mr. Bromley Smith would like to be called when we inform Mr. Reedy.

11 FEBRUARY 1965

00:40 a.m. NMCC telecon to Situation Room reports a
Flaming Dart 2 all fleet aircraft airborne
at 11/0500Z (0001 Washington Time).

01:05 a.m. Critic by phone received from CIA (separate
message).

00:30 a.m. 11/0300Z from Air Div to CTF reports Time over
Target 24 is 0600Z - Time over Target 32 is 0800Z.

01:00 a.m. 11/0333Z MACV to NMCC reported casualties at
Qui Nhon:

2 KIA (U.S.)
18 WIA (U.S.)
23 MIA (U.S.)

62 EMs billeted in hotel - 19 not in building at time
accounted for.

7VN civilians KIA in addition to 4 VN KIA previously
reported.

11/0442Z CTG 77.4 to JCS reported launches of 8AHL
at 11/0432Z from CVA 61 - TOT 11/0600Z.

01:05 a.m. 11/0451Z CTG 77.7 to JCS advised 8 AHL Rescap and
2 AHL "Barn Owl" launched at 11/0448Z. Estimated
TOT 11/0610Z.

01:10 a.m. 11/0500 CTG 77.5 to JCS reports 8A1 Strike and A1
Rescap launched CVA43 at 11/0500. Estimated TOT
11/0615.

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01:25 a.m. 11/0526Z CTG 77.7 to JCS reported launch from CVA19 of Strike, Suppress, Tarcap, Coordinator and Escort at 11/0525Z.

8 A4C

8 A4E

4 F8E

1 A4C

2 F8C

Estimated TOT 11/0610Z

01:40 a.m. 11/0325Z 2d Air Div to PACAF advises operation plan and composition of VNAF Strike Force for Target 32 (alternate Target 39). TOT is 11/0800Z.

02:15 a.m. 11/0616Z reports weather for Target 32 at 1800 feet broken, 3500 feet broken, visibility 3-4 miles. Weather recce proceeding to Target 39.

11/0553Z CTG 77.5 to JCS reports launches of CVA43 force at 11/0550Z - ETA at target 11/0615Z.

02:40 a.m. 11/0723Z - Secretary of State informs Saigon that U.S. must make announcement in Washington and requests Saigon hold off joint statement a couple of hours. Requests flash of proposed time Saigon will make announcement.

02:53 a.m. NMCC telecon to Situation Room reports both primary targets selected to be hit. Target 24 already hit.
11/0737Z from JCS reports one (1) Navy aircraft, type unknown, down 8NM from Dong Hoi at 90 degrees.

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03:20 a.m. NMCC telecon to Situation Room reports that pilot of the downed A1 aircraft has been recovered, however, another A4 aircraft was diverted to Danang with hung ordnance. His landing gear collapsed on touchdown and his bombs exploded.

03:25 a.m. The President called and talked with Bill Joy and Lt Col Cook requesting info on the strikes. We informed him that the U.S. strike had been made and the VNAF strike time was 3 a.m. We informed him that we had lost one Navy aircraft but the pilot was recovered. We informed him that one aircraft diverted to Danang with hung ordnance; gear collapsed on landing and munitions exploded. Runway at Danang is closed at this time. The President asked the results of our strike and we informed him we had received no results as yet. He asked that we call him when we have some results.

03:30 a.m. I called the NMCC and informed the Admiral on duty of the President's interest in getting a report of our strike. He informed me that results are just beginning to come in and that NMCC would give us strike results and information as rapidly as possible.

NMCC telecon to Situation Room reports 1 A4C flamed out but pilot ejected and has been recovered.

04:20 a.m. NMCC telecon to Situation Room reported NVAF launched at 11/0745Z. Have selected secondary target.

Pilot reportedly abandoned aircraft before it crashed at Danang.

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04:30 a.m. NMCC telecon to Situation Room reported all AlH aircraft (24) in second operation have been recovered.

05:00 a.m. Called Admiral Grimm, NMCC and again requested mission summary report. He informed me no definite results received yet; messages are in transit and he is making every effort to obtain results for us. He confirmed aircraft losses as follows:

- 1 AlH down at sea. Pilot recovered
- 1 A4C flameout and abandoned. Pilot recovered
- 1 A4 crashed at Danang and ordnance exploded. Pilot abandoned aircraft before explosion and was recovered.
- 1 F8D unaccounted for

VNAF diverted to secondary target - #39 - Chop Le Army Barracks. All VNAF aircraft recovered at Danang. Admiral Grimm will call PACAF and try to get verbal estimate of strike results.

05:15 a.m. Admiral Grimm of NMCC called and stated that 3 messages were being dispatched giving us as much information as they have at this time.

05:30 a.m. George Reedy was informed that Saigon announcement will be made at 7 a.m. Washington Time (8 p.m. Saigon Time). He stated that he plans to make the release in Washington at 8 a.m. Washington Time.

05:40 a.m. I called the President to give him the latest information we have on the mission. Informed him we had definitely lost 3 aircraft with all pilots recovered and that one aircraft is unaccounted for. Informed him that strike results are preliminary; first reports on USAF strike at Target 24 indicated heavy to moderate

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fires, 3 groups of barracks burning, dense smoke and dust rapidly obscuring the area. One gunboat attacked in the river and was observed burning. VNAF diverted to secondary target because of weather conditions. I informed the President that Saigon announcement was to be released at 7 a.m. Washington Time; that we had informed Mr. Reedy, who plans a Washington release at 8 a.m. The President made observation that the anti-aircraft seemed to be better than we thought, and I pointed out that at least 2 of the 4 aircraft we lost were from mechanical causes rather than enemy action. He asked how many aircraft were involved from the carrier force and I estimated the number at 85. He asked if the VNAF aircraft were all recovered and I informed him they were. The President asked how many people were in the areas that we hit. I informed him I did not have this information but would attempt to get an estimate from intelligence sources. I informed the President that we would continue monitoring mission reports and would attempt to provide more precise information for him as the morning progresses.

06:00 a.m.

Colonel Tisdale, DIA, called in response to our query concerning numbers of people in the target areas. DIA estimates a capacity of 2,000 at Chanh Hoa - approximately 10% in barracks at time of attack (which was near lunch time). At Chop Le, capacity is estimated as 5,000 with approximately 5% in barracks at strike time. Additional numbers were likely in the areas near barracks and could have been affected by the strike.

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06:00 a.m.

NMCC telecon to Situation Room reported that:

- 1 A4E crashed at Danang. Pilot recovered
- 1 A4C crashed. Pilot ejected and was recovered.
- 1 F8D missing

Earlier statement that an AlE was down was in error.

06:50 a.m.

Colonel Fay, NMCC, reports following revised aircraft loss statistics:

- 1 A4 crashed at sea - pilot recovered
- 1 A4 crashed at Danang - pilot recovered
- 1F8 missing

All lost aircraft were from Coral Sea. No losses from Hancock or Ranger.

All VNAF and USAF aircraft on the second mission have recovered except 1 RF101 and escort of 4 F-100s which are still airborne on BDA mission.

C 835

The President called for further information and was given a brief reply by Lt. Col. Clark and Mr. C. H. McGehee. The expressed dissatisfaction with the results being reported to him by the officers, lack of firmness etc. Mr. McGehee, Monday morning he being the President's liaison to Secretary McPherson.